

Oct. 30 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

NOTE: H.R. 4205, approved October 30, which incorporated the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001 as an appendix, was assigned Public Law No. 106–398.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Rename the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act *October 30, 2000*

Today, I am very pleased to sign into law H.R. 5417, which would rename the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, the “McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.”

I am deeply saddened by Representative Vento’s recent passing. Representative Vento was a great friend of the poor and the homeless. His leadership on the issue of homelessness will be greatly missed in Minnesota and across the Nation.

Representative Vento was a key leader in the effort to secure the original passage in 1987 of the McKinney Act, the first and still the most significant Federal program to assist homeless persons. His commitment to those left behind did not end with the passage of the homeless assistance bill. For over a decade he remained a leading voice for social justice on Capitol Hill, introducing legislation to expand and improve services to homeless people, and continually reminding his colleagues and the Amer-

ican people of our responsibility to our most vulnerable neighbors. Representative Vento was also a passionate advocate for affordable housing and protecting our Nation’s natural resources.

Bruce Vento’s passing represents a significant loss for Americans who care about ending homelessness, ensuring housing opportunity, and protecting the environment. Renaming the McKinney Act the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act will serve to regularly remind our Nation of Bruce Vento’s passion for justice and the responsibility we each have for our homeless neighbors.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 30, 2000.

NOTE: H.R. 5417, approved October 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106–400.

Statement on Signing the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 *October 30, 2000*

Today, I am pleased to sign into law S. 1809, the “Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000.” This legislation reauthorizes programs that support people with developmental disabilities and helps them achieve their maximum potential through increased self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration in all facets of life. The Act also adds important new authority to provide services and activities for families of individuals with developmental disabilities and the dedicated workers who assist them.

Since 1963, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act has made a crucial difference in the lives and futures of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Through this Act, Federal funds support the development and operation of State Councils, Protection and Advocacy Systems, University Centers (formerly known as university affiliated programs), and projects of national significance. This crucial investment has provided the structure to assist people with developmental disabilities to pursue meaningful and productive

lives. These programs have made community living possible for individuals across our Nation with significant disabilities. The Act has led to further Federal legislation in support of all people with disabilities. Therefore, it is only fitting that I am signing this legislation in the same year as the 25th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the 10th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

When the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act was first conceived by President Kennedy, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and Dr. Robert Cooke, the primary emphasis was on the advancement of scientific understanding, professional education, and ensuring access to, and safety of, institutional facilities. Later changes, as conceived by Dr. Elizabeth Boggs, Dr. Elsie Helsel, and others, focused on efforts of families, professionals, and State agencies to improve supports for all people with developmental disabilities. Today, the programs emphasize fundamental system change, including legal services and advocacy and capacity-building at the State and local levels. The focus is on listening to people with developmental disabilities as self-advocates, and helping people with developmental disabilities and their families obtain the information, assistive technology, and supports they need to make more informed

choices about how and where to live. An important aspect of today's work is to ensure self-determination and access to supports for historically unserved and underserved populations across the Nation. To ensure continued progress in these areas, S. 1809 now includes performance-based accountability requirements.

The programs carried out through this Act improve and expand opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. My Administration is committed to working with Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis to address issues of shared concern, and I encourage the next Administration and Congress to explore ways for this legislation to provide appropriate roles for Indian Tribes and Native Americans pursuant to this legislation.

Investments in the freedom and the future of Americans with significant, lifelong disabilities are important investments in the well-being of our Nation. For these reasons, I am pleased to sign the "Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000."

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 30, 2000.

NOTE: S. 1809, approved October 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-402.

Remarks at a Reception for African-American Religious Leaders *October 30, 2000*

Thank you. Well, that was a monumental introduction. [*Laughter*] I asked Billy if he thought there was another church anywhere in America named Monumental. But it was a monumental introduction. He was reminding me—we were standing up here—that we met the first time at the civil rights museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. I was there looking at the exhibit where the statue of Daisy Bates faces the statue of Governor Faubus. The country has come a long way since then, thanks in no small measure to people like all of you. And I welcome you here.

I want to thank Rodney Slater—we've worked together almost 20 years—and my friend Carroll Willis. They came to work for me when I was

running for Governor in 1982, and I was trying to do something that had never been done before. I had been elected; then I had been defeated; and I was trying to get elected again. And since you can't tell the voters they made a mistake, that's a pretty hard deal to sell. But we figured it out somehow.

I want to thank Ben Johnson, who runs our One America Office here; Alvin Brown, who runs the community empowerment program that Vice President Gore has led so well; Reverend Zina Pierre, who works for us here in Intergovernmental Affairs; and all the other people at the White House.

Later this week we're going to start a month-long celebration of the 200th anniversary of the